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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20591

A70-40

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

August 20, 1970

Honorable John H. Shaffer
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
Department of Transportation
Washington, D. C. 20590

Dear Mr. Shaffer:

On June 7, 1970, a Hughes Model 269A helicopter, N8918F, was involved in an incident. The pilot-owner experienced a loss of tail rotor control while the aircraft was hovering just prior to taking off from a private heliport at Washington, New Jersey.

Your General Aviation District Office at Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton Airport submitted the tail rotor blades to the Board for examination. The condition of one, P/N 269A6124, explained the control loss experienced in this incident. Examination of this failed blade, S/N 106-3018, disclosed a separation of the fiberglass airfoil skin from the steel spar due to voids in the bonding and unsatisfactory adhesion.

The Aircraft Division of the Hughes Tool Company issued a Service Information Notice No. N-58 on September 12, 1968, designed to advise owners of possible imperfections in the bonding of the tail rotor blade fiberglass skin to the spar and recommended inspection of these tail rotor blades. The pilot-owner of this aircraft stated he was unaware of the manufacturer's recommended inspection. He did recall being assured that all existing Airworthiness Directives were complied with at the time of his purchasing the used aircraft in March of this year.

In view of the existing potential for a serious accident due to tail rotor blade failure and resultant loss of control, the Board recommends that:

An Airworthiness Directive be issued requiring an inspection procedure, as published in Hughes Service Information Notice N-58.

Honorable John H. Shafter

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Personnel of your Eastern Region and Hughes Aircraft are aware of the details of this incident and our staff is available for further assistance if requested.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John H. Reed", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

John H. Reed
Chairman